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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000191

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SUBJECT: ROGOZIN "SHOCKED" BY NATO EXPULSIONS OF RUSSIAN
DIPLOMATS

Classified By: CHARGE KATE BYRNES FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

¶1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: In a May 8 meeting with Ambassador Volker, Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin spoke positively about resuming concrete work in the NATO-Russia Council even while complaining that the recent NATO expulsion of two Russian diplomats was unjustified. Ambassador Volker disagreed, arguing that NATO responded moderately and that the issue should be put to rest. Ambassador Volker urged Rogozin to move beyond his negative rhetoric about NATO and instead advocate work on areas of common security interests between NATO and Russia. Speaking without instructions, Ambassador Rogozin said he thought Moscow would prefer to schedule the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Foreign Ministerial when new Secretary General Rasmussen was in place, adding that Moscow was interested in having Rasmussen visit Moscow in October. Ambassador Volker suspected it would be difficult for Rasmussen to visit Moscow if the NATO Information Office in Moscow--which was effectively closed by the recent Russian expulsion of two Canadian diplomats who ran the Office--was not re-staffed so that it could effectively function. END SUMMARY

Shocked by the Expulsions

¶2. (C/NF) Ambassador Rogozin claimed he was shocked by NATO's April 29 expulsion of two Russian diplomats. He said neither diplomat had anything to do with espionage and that he was incredulous at the claims that they were. Stressing that the expulsion decision had been NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's to make, Ambassador Volker said that our information about the two diplomats differed from that claimed by Rogozin. He also said that after a case like Hermann Simm--an Estonian who had been convicted for passing NATO classified information to Moscow--Russia had to know there would be a reaction from the Alliance. Volker said that he thought NATO had chosen a moderate response, adding that had this been directed against the U.S. or another Ally bilaterally, the response could have been sharper.

¶3. (C/NF) Ambassador Volker said that Russia's response to the expulsion of the Russian diplomats--a tit-for-tat expulsion of two Canadian diplomats seconded to the NATO Information Office (NIO) in Moscow--was unjustified. Noting that the expulsion of the Canadians effectively shut the NIO, Ambassador Volker expressed hope that Moscow would allow the

Office to be re-staffed soon. (Note: The two Canadians were the only full-time NATO diplomatic staff in the NIO, while Russia has approximately 50 diplomats accredited to its Mission to NATO.)

Justifying the Rhetoric

¶4. (C/NF) Rogozin went to great pains to explain his most recent anti-NATO rhetoric in the Russian and international press, while expressing his hope that the NRC would still be able to move forward. In defending his admittedly emotional response, he said he was trying to take the wind out of the sails of the hard-liners in Moscow who wanted to scupper relations with NATO. He said the reaction in Moscow to the expulsions had been like a "bomb explosion." Rogozin stressed that he had been careful not to link the incident to President Obama, as he did not want to damage the President's image with the Russian population prior to the upcoming meeting between the U.S. and Russian presidents. Ambassador Volker emphasized that Rogozin's fiery rhetoric was extremely unproductive because it perpetuates an "enemy image" of NATO inside Russia. He urged Rogozin to instead speak out on behalf of NATO-Russia cooperation.

Let's focus on the Practical Work

¶5. (C/NF) Ambassador Volker stressed the need to do "real stuff" within the NATO-Russia context, adding that the U.S.

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would like to focus on Afghanistan, counter-piracy, the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, Theatre Missile Defense, and NRC reform. Rogozin agreed, stating that work should continue to reform the NRC as proposed in a series of non-papers which had been distributed. In this regard, he said he thought the U.S.-Czech-German non-paper might serve as a good basis for further discussion.

¶6. (C/NF) Ambassador Rogozin proposed a joint U.S.-Russia press conference following the next NRC Ambassadorial. Ambassador Volker said he would pass this idea on to his successor.

Timing of the NRC Foreign Ministerial

¶7. (C/NF) Stressing that he was speaking on an uninstructed basis, Rogozin said he doubted Russian FM Lavrov would want to do the NRC Foreign Ministerial with outgoing NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer in the chair, preferring to wait instead for new NATO Secretary General Rasmussen. When Ambassador Volker noted that this would mean the NRC Ministerial would then be in September or October, Rogozin suggested the possibility of a September meeting tied to the EU GAERC. Ambassador Volker noted that it would also be possible to link it to the UNGA, if they were looking at September.

¶8. (C/NF) Rogozin said Moscow would like Rasmussen to visit Moscow in October. Volker said he thought it would be difficult for Rasmussen to agree a visit until the NIO was again fully staffed and functioning. Rogozin supposed that it would be up and running again if NATO sends people this fall. Rogozin asserted that he had always been a defender of the Information Office.

BYRNES